

REMARKS

Claims 1-11 and 13-28 are pending. By this Amendment, claims 1-2, 7, 10, and 13-14 are amended, claims 3-6, 8-9, 11-12, and 15-28 are canceled, and new claims 29-46 are added. Support for the amendments and new claims 29-46 can be found throughout the specification as originally filed, such as, for example, at pages 4-12 and Figures 1-26 of the specification as originally filed.

Claims Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-2, 6-8, and 9-11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,676,036 to Bessert (“Bessert”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,180,460 to Liskey, Jr. (“Liskey”). Claims 3-4 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bessert in view of Liskey and U.S. Patent No. 4,503,651 to Pugh (“Pugh”). Claims 5, 7, 15-16, and 19-26 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bessert in view of Liskey and U.S. Patent No. 6,871,454 to Coday Sr. (“Coday”). Claims 13-14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,676,036 to Bessert in view of Liskey and U.S. Patent No. 2,479,962 to Paulson (“Paulson”). Claims 17-18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bessert in view of Liskey, Coday, and Pugh. Claims 27-28 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bessert in view of Liskey, Coday, and Paulson. Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections for at least the following reasons.

Applicant has amended claims 1-2, 7, 10, and 13-14 to recite additional limitations not disclosed by Bessert or the other references. These amendments are being made without

prejudice or disclaimer. Applicant respectfully reserves the right to pursue the original claims or similar claims in future continuing applications.

Amended claim 1 recites “an attachment plate configured to operably couple the first cross beam substantially transverse to the first main beam and slidable on the first main beam with respect to the main beam length” and “a floor panel having floor coupling structure slidable on the beam coupling structure with respect to the main beam length.”

No prima facie case of obviousness has been established at least because neither Bessert nor any of the other references cited by the Examiner, individually or in combination, discloses, suggests, or includes evidence of these limitations. In particular, Bessert, Liskey, Pugh, Coday, and Paulson disclose fail to disclose either an attachment plate that is slidable on a first main beam with respect to the length of the first main beam or floor coupling structure that is slidable on beam coupling structure with respect to the length of the first main beam.

In fact, Bessert, Liskey, Pugh, Coday, and Paulson teach away from a cross beam that is transversely coupled to a main beam and slidable on the main beams by virtue of an attachment plate. For example, Bessert discloses a plurality of pan support stringers (26a, 26b). These pan support stringers are attached to a vertical support tube (17), rather than to each other, by clip extension members (280a, 280b, 280c, 280d) (Bessert, Figs. 2-3). As a result of this configuration, the pan support stringers are not slidable with respect to transverse pan support stringers. In Liskey, stringers (S, B) are similarly supported by caps (14) that are attached to a base plate (10). (Liskey, Fig. 1 and col. 1, l. 71 – col. 2, l. 5.) This prevents a stringer (S) from sliding with respect to the length of a stringer (B). In Pugh, beams are joined end-to-end by a latch plate. (Pugh, Figs. 1-2 and col. 3, l. 27 – col. 4, l. 63.) Nothing in Pugh, however, suggests

that the latch plate can be used to slidably join the beams in a transverse orientation. In Coday, support members (44, 46, 48, 50) are attached to post shore (23) assemblies, (Coday, Fig. 1 and col. 4, ll. 30-65), but are not transversely slidable. And in Paulson, a scaffolding system is disclosed that includes ledgers (44) mounted in ledger supports. (Paulson, col. 3, ll. 5-16.) As with beams disclosed in Pugh and the support members disclosed in Coday, the ledgers disclosed in Paulson cannot be coupled to a main beam and are not slidable with respect to the length of the main beam. Moreover, none of the aforementioned references disclose a floor panel that is also slidable with respect to the length of the main beam. Based on the foregoing, there is no prima facie case of obviousness.

Therefore, claim 1 is allowable at least for the reasons set forth above. Claims 2, 7, and 13-14 depend from claim 1 and are allowable for at least the same reasons set forth in relation to claim 1. The rejections of claims 2-11, 13-14 and 16-28 are traversed but not expressly argued in view of the allowability of the underlying base claims.

Applicant has added claims 29-46 to further distinguish the present invention from the cited references. Claims 29-35 depend from claim 1 and are allowable for at least the same reasons set forth in relation to claim 1. Claim 36 is allowable over the cited references at least because it recites “coupling a first cross beam to the first main beam with a first attachment plate such that the first cross beam is substantially transverse to the first main beam length,” “sliding the first attachment plate on the first main beam with respect to the first main beam length,” and “sliding the floor panel on the first main beam with respect to the main beam length” similar to now-allowable claim 1. Claim 43 is allowable over the cited references at least because it recites “means for coupling the first cross beam substantially transverse to the first main beam,” “means

for sliding the first cross beam on the first main beam with respect to the main beam length,” and “means for sliding the floor panel on the first main beam with respect to the main beam length.” Bessert, Liskey, Pugh, Coday, and Paulson, alone or in combination, fails to disclose or suggest these limitations.

Therefore, claims 36 and 43 are allowable. Claims 37-42 depend from claim 36 and claims 44-46 depend from claim 43. Therefore, claims 37-42 and 44-46 are allowable for at least the same reasons set forth with respect to claims 36, and 43, respectfully.

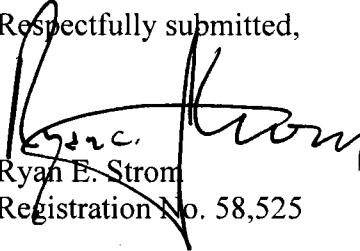
Applicant has canceled claims 3-6, 8-9, and 15-28. Therefore, the rejections of these claims are now moot.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance of the application are respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned if the Examiner believes it would be useful to advance prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,



Ryan E. Strom
Registration No. 58,525

Customer No. 24113
Patterson, Thunte, Skaar & Christensen, P.A.
4800 IDS Center
80 South 8th Street
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402-2100
Telephone: (612) 349-3011